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EDITORIAL.

On more than one occasion, the Editors of *Southerly* have been taken to task for including a large proportion of critical as distinguished from "creative" matter, the implication being that the one kind is of less account than the other. Our April issue, for example, was almost condemned by one writer for the sole reason that the reviews, the survey of Australian literary publication over the past two years, and the article on Australian criticism that it contained seemed to him to occupy too much space by comparison with the story and the poems. An opportunity is thus offered to the Editors to justify their policy in this regard, and also to say a word about what seems to them an invidious distinction between two equally worthy, though perhaps not always equally difficult, classes of literary work.

One of the purposes of *Southerly* is to provide help to readers in the critical estimation of new books; and to this end the review copies received or sought out are submitted to qualified judges. Setting for themselves a high standard of accuracy and impartiality, these spare no pains to make their appraisals illuminating to readers and helpful to the authors, as well as good examples of critical method and literary style. If no other claim can be made for *Southerly*, it may at least be said that the "Brought to Book" section has maintained its standard from issue to issue and is thus gradually building up a solid body of permanently useful interpretation and opinion.

This in itself would indicate that the work is worth continuing. But critical writing is supposed by some to be inferior to "creative". Why not, it is almost asked, reduce the number of reviews and discussion articles, and print mainly poems, stories, sketches, essays, and so on? Why not show a more definite preference for original matter? This is not done, because the distinction, while it may be useful practically, seems to be wholly unjust to the art of the critic.

Surely the history of English literature shows that the good critic is as rare as the good poet! How many critics could we name whom we should trust? How many sound critics are living to-day? Yet fair "creative" writers abound. Would not this in itself suggest that the difficulty of "creation" and the difficulty of critieism are not comparable? Everyone knows how judgments of books differ, how puzzlingly hard it is to secure agreement among a number of people upon the one literary specimen. On the other hand, writing as a "creative" activity was surely never less troublesome to the author than it is to-day. Modern theory, modern experiment, have led the beginner to think that all he has to do is to express himself, his conscious or his unconscious mind, so that often he merely sits down and writes, the result being or not being art as chance and the quality of his own mind may decide. None of what Yeats called "the intolerable labour of composition", no more turning on the Muses' anvil, simply—output. This is not to condemn modern literature, which the Editors would be far from doing, for the results, even of such an apparently haphazard manner of procedure, are frequently novel and stimulating, and some of the works so produced will last as representative of the twentieth-century spirit; but the fact suggests at least that more respect seems due for the critic, who, if he is conscientious, writes with care and toil, and—what is more—out of acquired knowledge and judgment. It must be admitted that there is far too much mere impressionism in literary criticism to-day, but such has never been offered to *Southerly*. Its critics, one may claim, have a strong sense of responsibility, and deserve the fullest appreciation of their effort. It is even possible that from the number of younger writers on literary topics will emerge some professional critics of permanent importance. And that result would truly be as much a matter for self-congratulation as if *Southerly* had been the means of bringing forward poets whose names would last.

MY LIFE AND WORKS, ACCORDING TO MY SCHOLARS.

Per R.G.H.

NOBODY, nowadays, doubts that I am a great poet. There was a time when the fame of William Hughtry was overshadowed by that of my contemporary Bren Christen, but critics have been busy, and the result is that I stand out as the ego of my age, all my fellows being seen to group themselves around me, with Christen jealously occupying a near, but none the less subordinate, place.

The date of my birth is uncertain, but an upward limit is supplied by the fact that if I wrote *Cries from Kosciusko* in 1916 I was only ten at that time. The lower limit is 1880, for I could not possibly have been more than thirty-six when I wrote it. Unfortunately the records of the Regis-Star-General (some query whether it could be possible that a military commander was in those days entrusted with the keeping of citizens' personal accounts) were all destroyed in the great word-putsch emanating from the Domain in 1961, and certainty will never be established. A lucky find which may throw some light on the question was, however, made only the other day in Fiji—a letter, or rather note, which said, "Dear Uncle" (in the curious manner of address of those days), "come here. We have never needed you so much"; and was signed "Arthur Hughtry". Could this have been my father; or, alternatively, my son? If the former, as it was dated 1895, it is possible that the reference is to my birth. If the latter, then perhaps I had just died—but no, it is quite clear that I did write *Cries from Kosciusko* in 1916, and, unless I used a planchette, in those circumstances I could not have done so. But let us leave this matter. It is all very involved, and doubtless will never be settled.

At any rate I was an Australian. No foreign country can claim me. An attempt was made in New Zealand, some years ago, to show that my name was of Maori origin—"Hutuwai", meaning "How's the liver?" Personally, I doubt this, but, of course, I am not in a position to express an opinion.

Scholars believe that I was born under canvas, on the gold-diggings, there being somewhere a tradition of my birthplace as Tent-o'-field. Romantic and florid speakers at my jubilees and centenaries have compared this indiscoverable site to the Field of the Cloth of Gold, for, as the poet Green has it, "there was the golden earth which first he trod". A spot has been selected on the western plains for a commemorative pillar bearing my name and the probable date of my birth, but unhappily the stonemason put in an extra Roman ten, so that I seem to be by so much younger than I should be, and scholars of the future are bound to be perplexed, especially as no steps have been taken to undo the error, for fear of spoiling the stone. Every now and then some young pilgrim discovers and proclaims the addition, but even his indignation makes no difference. Lying, I stand uncorrected.

The evidence for my death is negative rather than positive. If I were alive in 1950 I could hardly have resisted writing about the collapse of the Harbour Bridge under great pressure of circumstances, for I seldom let any public occasion pass, and as for a number of years I had vociferously objected to the structure because nowhere in Sydney was it possible to lose sight of it I must have penned some song of triumph. But, unless a fragment found at Adelaide headed "Lightning Ridge" (for which FitzMack argues that "Lightning [B]ridge" must be substituted, b's being notoriously elusive things), and referring to "a collapse . . . market" (i.e. "mark it!") be mine, I viewed the ruin unmoved. In that case I was certainly dead. On the other hand there is not a single contemporary reference to my demise. This would seem, on the face of it, to argue that I am still alive; but no scholar has yet been found to advance that startling hypothesis. In the absence of any mention of my death, and considering what the life of man is, it must be presumed that I am dead, and the date may plausibly be put at 1949.

Over my works what controversy has raged! Did I, or did I not, write "Song be Delicate", *Essay on Memory,* and "When your pants begin to go"? As to these, I regret to say that I did not. They were by my contemporaries, whose names someone will one day have the pleasure of discovering.

Was I in part responsible for *The Sentimental Bloke* and "How we Beat the Favourite"? Gladly I say I was not. But can these questions be decided? It seems not. Professor Urse writes in *Southerly* to prove that I was the author of all the works mentioned. A young sprout in Brisbane roundly tells him in the *Meanjin Papers* that he "fails to know what he is talking about", and should go back to Cuba, whence he came. But the worst of all are those who tear to pieces the text of my authentic writings, seeking to establish collaboration, plagiarism from others, revision after revision, and what not. These alone do not acknowledge that I wrote "Weary am I" in one lying, with no assistance other than from the eucalyptus-brandy bottle, after taking a course of public lectures. The story is traditional, and so fully accredited. One of them, the most venturesome, asserts that the first words indicate the real author to be one "Weare" or "Weire", who used poetic licence on his name for the sake of a pun (like "old Gaunt indeed, and Gaunt in being old"—but I did not write that), thus depriving me of my just glory. Another, accepting the suggestion, believes that my collaborator, Weare, commenced the poem for me, since it was notoriously difficult for me to make a beginning; and accordingly maintains that the opening is inferior to the rest. I thank him.

All editors of my works have now accepted the emendations of Fletcher Brown, who examined my text with minute care and came to the conclusion that, in my later years, I must have been suffering from cataract, for I miswrote many words, as I could not possibly have done had my sight been perfect. Thus "here" appears where one might reasonably expect "there"; "life" stands for "lice". An editor must certainly scratch these out. And in one of my most famous lines, no future reader will be satisfied with the familiar reading:

I must wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled:

he must have, instead:

I must wear the buttons of my trousers old.

What an improvement in sense, propriety and euphony! How much do we owe to the selfless labours of Fletcher Brown!

On the question of my private life, speculation has exhausted itself. Was I, or was I not, married? Whether or

no, did I, or did I not, leave progeny? Are the numerous Hughtries of whom record is found in that time, though no written trace of me remains, to be imputed to me, or must my relations have been unduly prolific? Or were we, though of the same name, not related at all? Mistakes are more likely to occur here than in almost any other department of Hughtry enquiry. But it should, I think, be made clear that it would have been extremely difficult for one man to be in so many places at the one time, as the aggregate of my propagations would seem to indicate. Let them first make up their minds where I lived; then perhaps a study of the transport systems, with a special detailed examination of preserved tram-tickets, on which, it may be, finger prints can be found, will furnish some clue as to my genial activities.

It is surely, however, indisputable that I ate and drank and was a leading spirit in that gay Bohemian Sydney of the earlier twentieth century. My "fleshy beak of a nose"—to quote a famous description—was to be seen night after night in the cafés of the town, Sargent's and Cole's; echoes of my wit reverberated round the room; and people came miles for the honour of my acquaintance. It is therefore quite surprising that not one of my remarks has been preserved, though memoirs and autobiographies of that period abound; not a single anecdote is told about me. Did I, after all, "walk on earth unguessed at", as Matthew Carlyle is said to have thought? How much of me is mere legend?

The internal evidence of my poems discloses, however, that I must have been, at one time or another, a lawyer, a doctor, an engineer, a sailor, a soldier, a brick-carter, a miner, a statesman, a swagman, a train-driver, a beachcomber, a salesman and a farmer; and no doubt if one were to go further one would find that I was also an antique Roman and a mediæval monk. Small wonder that I have been hailed as "myriad-minded"! No other man has ever held so many offices and followed so many occupations, all of which are reflected in my verse. I am the most experienced man that ever was. "All pains the immortal spirit must endure Find their soul noise in that victorious row", as one of my admirers queerly wrote, of my words. But when was I this, and when was I

that? How could I have found time, in the intervals of composition and fatherhood, to be successively or concurrently even a few of the things I am supposed to have been? These questions are now being asked. And lately the theory has been advanced that I did nothing whatsoever all my life, but merely sucked the brains of my friends or acquaintances in various professions, and used their experience as though it were my own. This involves extensive enquiry into the life of my time, in the course of which I am often in danger of being forgotten.

To sum up, then. I—or someone—wrote poetry. I wrote it no one knows when. I began life at some unfixed date and ceased at another almost equally obscure. I was evidently the intimate of all sorts of people. There were numerous persons of the same name. I was probably going blind in my last years. All this has been long established. But one possibility, that has not been considered, remains: what if I never existed at all?

"ERIGOLIA."

When the ripe harvest, rolling from the fields,
Flows in a golden stream, and in its wake
The slow red dust-haze settles on the years,
There is no festival that we can make,
No moonlight revelry to mock old fears
With glad rejoicing for the good earth's yields.

We are no ancient folk, but weary men,
Matched, and grown weak, and stifled with the soil;
Heavy with earth, how can we live again?
We blindly sense, but know not why we toil.

Fast in the golden fetters of the grain,
We watch it idly trickle from our hands
And spill reluctantly on straw-strewn ground—
A tyrant, crushing in its earth-born bands
All of the worth that we in life have found,
And leaving it for us a way in vain.

So, when the summer flaunts, with lazy pride,
Its shimmering yellow wheatfields in the sun,
We, season's slaves, are called, and far and wide,
Must shade our eyes and sweat till harvest's done.

E.S.

FESTIVAL OF FREEDOM.

Night, the inflexible turncock, closing to silence
All fluted valves of the bird throats,
Cuts off their jets of fountaining song,
And broad benediction of an open sky
Absolves from cares the sleeping Battery.
But I, awake, a lonely Antaeus,
Find strength reborn at touch of the earth,
Escaped from the concentration camp
Of cities, suburbs, imprisoning houses,
And all the tyranny of bricks
That mocks and angers the free mind.

Here on the ground, out on trek,
I sing with wonder, regaining joy
Of earth, and sky, and living bush,
Feasting on spread light of unimpeded stars,
Tossing down the heady schooners of space
Drawn from bottomless kegs of the heavens,
Climbing to peaks of drunken exultation
To glimpse vistas revealed, perspectives,
Over the clouds misting the desolate valleys.
I hold high festival of freedom
Expanded from self to the people,
Opening out the lives of caverned men,
Range upon range, to blue horizons.
I see new values of earth, stone, and brick,
Margined with annotations on our mad times,
Rounded with readings to emend
The text of our corrupted tragedies.

Earth moves as the fertile mother of all:
She brings forth the fattening grass,
Eared grain, flowers bee-quarried for honeycomb,
And the straight, clean trees rising
Superior to twisted undergrowth of men.
Stone, too, is born of earth's own lineage,
Grown by time to hardness of limonite,
Or grained, dappled, and flushed
To soft loveliness of Hawkesbury sandstone,
Blossoming once to bulls of Babylon,
Needling the sky's blue arras with Gothic spires.
Even stone gaols stand squarely honest,
Simple with straight sincerity of stone.

But bricks are hypocrites, wearing false faces
Of comfort and order, cemented with lies,
Pretending we are housed safe
From the troubling mysteries of elder night,
Havened from iced winds of death.
Bricks are thieves that rob us of sunlight,
Sun-loosed limbs, and sun-warmed minds,
Filching the sky from our hearts.

Earth nourishes man's body at her full breasts.
Stone ascends and flowers from his dreams,
Rooted in strength, fretted to beauty.
But bricks are fashioned from muddied clay
In the burning kilns of man's hot greed,
Their hungry, impelling artifex.
Their hardness is man's greed, cruelty, and fear.
They are baked in the heat
Of lust for wealth and dominion.
So makers of bricks mortice their profits
With monopolies, counting their thirty,
Forty, fifty, hundred per cents
In the swollen ledgers of rapacity.
Only bandits make bricks;
Only slaves are bricked up in fear.

Are not our lives walled up with greed,
Bricked into submission of flinching curs?
Do we not all, clinging to security,
Crouch, tuck tail between legs, and fear the blow
That may snatch the bone from our mouths
And the mouths of our wives and children,
And the hard-won home from our heads?
Even the moneyed lords truckle to fear,
And tremble, listening, afraid
Of the rising storm of the rumbling masses,
And so lead us, weaponless, to doom.
Bricks, homes, and bonds have cowed us!
Greed and fear are the age's dictators,
Bludgeoning us with harsh truncheons,
Making chaos between nations, classes, and men,
Till the sunlight is tainted with terror,
And the jackboot tramps on our lives.
They tear nations into tattered halves
Of rich and poor, of castes warring.
They are sole promoters of that gigantic fight
Where labour and capital, stripped Titans, wrestle

Unceasingly for savage holds and falls
In a gongless, unrefereed struggle
On the unrolled mat of the stadium earth.

They are the century's diseases, corrupting
The body social, till infection decays,
Rots into gangrenous Hitlers,
Makes accomplices of blind Chamberlains,
Spawns forth Quislings and crawling Lavals.
And out of the maggots come murders.
Blood of men and the tears of women
Stream from the wounded side of the world,
Where the bombs of barbarian conflicts
Explode in the armourless flesh.

Not only the high-priests of holocaust,
The old men of greed, fearing
Revolution more than war, offering
Bodies of youth to a thousand knives
Of death, not only these
Darken the countries with cries for the lost,
And hollow to emptiness the living hearts.
Are we not all, all of us, guilty?
Accessories to injustice, unconscious Cains
Taking the lives of our legioned brothers?
We lay in warm dreams, baking on indolent sands,
And never ran out a succouring reel
When the cry for help came from the Weimar Republic,
And the German people were torn and mangled
By the shark-jaws of hunger and humiliation.
We trod ways of dishonour and indifference,
Casting the Czechs into pitiless night,
And leaving unanswered, unheeded,
The calls of the workless workers.
For who is there, luck-blest in fortune's lottery,
Who has not known Circean comfort
Charm insidiously to swinish feature,
Conscience larded over to a sow's sloth?
Hardly, in our cushioned ease, did its prickings
Puncture complacency's thick skin,
Unless, as the harsh caw of a crow
Hits and splinters
The porcelain hush of a sun-drowsed noon,
A random stone of misery, hurled by life,
Broke the smooth pane of our contentment,
Revealing the raw night of horrors
Before we drew again the defensive curtain.

If we have not taken Lucretian pleasure
Watching from headlands the shipwrecked below,
We yet have failed to man the lifeboats
To cleave the surf's tumult, and grasp
Those raftless derelicts—tossed overboard
To lighten the coffin-ship of profit—
Who beat churned waters of despair,
Snatching at thin planks of doles that scarcely
Kept chin afloat on the mere existing.

But there comes an end to long patience
When a wall is taken away,
And men discover greed's percentages,
Inflated with interest of doles and wars,
Stamped on the rubbled bricks.
Then they turn into hieroglyphs of hate.
Then rage burns fiercer than kilns of greed.
When shall the breath of anger grow,
Swell, widen with rushing winds,
And many flames unite in one vast fire
To burn the world clean of corruption?
Bastilles of stone have fallen
To assaults of a rising people.
When shall our brick Bastilles be broken?
How shall they be overthrown—
Shattered with picks and hammers,
Or blasted with bombs to red dust?

In the past, in the apricot eves of peace,
Always I shut the mind's door fast
Against the rap-rap-rapping of revolution,
Hating blood and destruction,
Knowing how force, undammed, ever flooded
To a violence breaking all banks,
Cataracting to despots and new tyrannies.
No need for Lenins in our Tsarless land,
Where men go free in the sunshine
And even the law curtsies to living equity.
Yet now, with hand on the latch, I wonder
If the door must open one day at last.
For now, on land and sea and air,
Floodgates of force stand wide,
And thousands die storming the Nazi guns.
Once before, at Sari Bair, Pozières, and Ypres,
Blood soaked the ground in vain,
Rinsed out to nothingness by a lost peace.

Shall more millions be massacred vainly
If greed be left, remaining as master,
To order another carnage of our sons?
If, then, there must be blood taken,
Surely it were wiser to start with the Chamberlains,
Stop all breeding of their progeny of Hitlers,
So ending the line of tyrants and wars,
Since the hour demands, not plasters or unguents,
But the surgical knife to core of catastrophe.
If the hand of time must sow
Anguish, pain, and sorrow,
Shall we not reap, not wastage alone,
But harvest of peace-making justice,
Provisioning granaries of social freedom?

Here, in the exalted night, I swear
On the wide testament of earth,
By the starry name of the sky above me,
That when these, my sleeping comrades,
Pass on fields of fire into other sleeps,
Their deaths shall win battles of redemption,
Not only from our evil, enslaving enemy,
But also from those darker, invisible foes
Who haled him into menacing power--
Greed and fear, our age's dictators.
Come! Let us rise together, grip hands,
And make, unfaltering, this dedication
To a truer, wider festival of freedom,
So earth shall breathe a cleaner air,
And men—not scrabbling for endangered crusts,
Not splintering the flesh with hail
Volleyed from tempest of bombers diving,
Not, as greed's oppressors, fearing the oppressed,
Or, sufferers from oppression, fearing the master—
Shall walk as free men in common journeyings,
Down roads of peace, to certain toil
And bright, unshaken homes,
Proud comrades in work as we in war,
Linked no less in mateship,
Laughing, unashamed, and fearless,
The strong sons of our sunlit earth!

T. Inglis Moore.
(A.I.F.)

Holdsworthy Camp.

THE INITIATION OF PERCEVAL.

By L. A. Triebel.

Old French literature has a great epic in the *Song of Roland,* giving expression to love for "la doulce France" and to the zeal of knights in the service of their sovereign lord waging war against the infidel. This national "chanson de geste" tells of Count Roland,

> Of lovely France and of his countrymen,
> Of Charlemagne, his liege . . .,

of vigorous manhood, uncompromising morality, of hard knocks given and taken for Christendom and the King.

Less well known, except to students of mediaeval texts, is another early French narrative poem, the *Perceval* or *Chevalier del Graal,* by Chrétien de Troyes. This fluent versifier of the twelfth century recited the traditional deeds of King Arthur of Britain and his Knights of the Round Table who quested the Holy Grail. Like Tennyson in *Gareth and Lynette,* Chrétien mirrors the golden time of Arthur's kingdom when young men appeared at court to seek knighthood, craved the boon of service, and thence rode forth to deliver the oppressed:

> Man am I grown, a man's work must I do,
> Follow the deer? follow the Christ, the King,
> Live pure, speak true, right wrong, follow the King—
> Else, wherefore born?

Sir Perceval, like Gareth, spurned the blandishments of ease and of peace without honour. The simple, concrete actuality of Chrétien's treatment of the legend will be seen from his description of the workings and resolution of a youth's mind in the following episode which I translate.

Chrétien says:

It was at the time of year when the fruit-trees blossom and the woods are clad in foliage, when the grass is green again and birds sweetly sing their morning-song; then all Nature breaks out into new joy. In the lonely forest the widow's son rose, saddled his horse, took three darts in his hand and left his mother's manor-house. He was minded

to watch her farm-labourers, harrowing a field of oats with six harrows and twelve oxen. He rode into the forest and soon the shining sun and the singing birds filled him with joy. He took out his horse's bit and let it feed on the fresh green grass. Then skilfully he knew how to throw his darts all around, ahead of him and behind, up and down, for sheer delight.

All at once he heard a noise. Five Knights, in full armour, were crossing the forest with a crashing sound. Their arms often struck against the hornbeams and the oaks, armour clanged and lances knocked against shields; iron and wood resounded from coats of mail and escutcheons.

The youth heard this ere yet he saw those coming. He marvelled and said within him, "Upon my soul, often did my mother tell me that devils are more terrifying than anything else in the world and indeed she told me to make the sign of the cross if I met any. But I'll not do that. If they appear before me, I'll throw one of my darts with all my strength, so hard that the devils will not dare touch me."

So he spoke before he saw them, but when they suddenly came into the glade where he was, he could see the mail-armour with its sparkling meshes and the shining helmets, the lances and the shields whose green and red gloss reflected in the sunlight; when he saw the gold and silver and sky-blue, he was filled with admiration and cried to God for forgiveness: "Forgive my words, for these are angels. Greatly did I sin when I mistook them for devils. Did not my mother tell me that the angels are, after God, what is most beautiful in all the world? No doubt the first one, finer even than the others, must be God Himself. Mother told me to pray to God on bended knee. I'll go and worship Him and His angels."

In the middle of the clearing he threw himself down and on his knees recited all the prayers he knew.

The leader of the troop bade his companions stay behind and said, "This boy fell down when he saw us. If we were to advance upon him now he would die for fear and be unable to answer the questions that I want to ask him."

The others stopped, and the chief, going up to Perceval, greeted him gently. "Don't be afraid, boy", he said.

"I'm not afraid", replied Perceval, "but, tell me, aren't you God?"

"I? Indeed not."

"Who are you then?"

"I'm a Knight."

"A Knight? I don't know what that is; I've never seen any Knights nor have I ever heard speak of them. But you are indeed as fine as God. If only I were like you, shining and dressed so finely."

The Knight came closer still and asked, "Did you see five Knights and three maidens pass this way?"

But the boy, instead of answering, had stretched out a hand towards his lance, and as he handled it, he said, "Fine sir, you who are called Knight, what is it you're carrying there?"

"That's indeed a fine way to address me!" said the other, smiling. "I wanted news from you and then you question me. But I'll tell you—it's my lance."

"Do you say that you throw it as I do my darts?"

"No, boy; what a simpleton you are! You smite your foe with it."

"Why, then I prefer one of these three darts that you see here, for I can kill anything with them, bird or beast, and from as great a distance as with an arrow."

"Good fortune be yours, but tell me, did you see these Knights and maidens?"

The boy meanwhile had seized the shield and said, "What's this, and of what use is it to you?"

"Truly, you make a fool of me; you do nothing but answer my questions with others. Well, I'll please you: this thing that I'm carrying is a shield."

"A shield?"

"Yes, and I don't despise it. If anyone wants to strike me, it wards off the blow; that's the service is renders me."

Whilst they were talking thus, those who had kept back rejoined their chief, and said to him, "My lord, what is this Welshman telling you?"

"He knows but little of the world", replied the Knight. "He won't answer my questions, but questions me on every-

thing he sees, wants to know its name and what is done with it."

"My lord, you must know that Welshmen have no sense; this one is like the others; it's a waste of time to talk to him."

"I don't know", replied the chief, "but he amuses me, and I'll let him ask as many questions as he likes. Come, boy", he went on, turning towards Perceval, "tell me whether you saw the five Knights and the maidens."

But the youth had caught hold of a large piece of armour and drew it towards him. "Tell me, noble lord, what's this that you've put on?"

"You don't know?"

"No."

"It's my armour."

"It's as heavy as iron."

"That's because it's made of iron, as you can see."

"I don't know, but it's very beautiful. And what do you do with it? Of what use is it to you?"

"It protects me: thanks to it, if you were to throw darts at me or shoot at me with arrows, you couldn't do me any harm."

"My lord Knight, may God keep the stags and deer from having such armour, for I shouldn't be able to kill any more."

"Well now, come along, answer my question."

And then the artless boy replied, "Were you born like that?"

"Indeed no."

"And who fitted you out like that?"

"Less than five days since King Arthur gave me all my arms and dubbed me Knight. But now tell me what you know of the five Knights escorting three maidens: were they going at just a walking pace or fleeing fast?"

"My lord, look up there, at that mountain; do you see that big wood covering its summit? That's the Valdone pass."

"What about it, dear boy?"

"There my mother's farm-labourers are harrowing the soil and sowing seed. If the people you mention went that way, the labourers saw them and will tell you."

The Knights said that if he would show them the way they would go with him as far as the field of oats to find the harrowers.

The youth remounted and went with the strangers. When the labourers saw him arrive with such companions they trembled with fear, for they knew that if he had spoken to them he would wish to become a Knight and that his mother, who wanted at all costs to dissuade him from it, would lose her reason in consequence.

Perceval said to them, "Have you seen five Knights and three maidens pass this way?"

"They've just crossed the pass", was the answer.

"My lord", said Perceval to the one of whom he had asked so many questions, "here's the path they took. But do tell me about this King who makes Knights; where is he to be found?"

"For the present he sojourns at Cardeuil, and if he's no longer there, you could find someone to tell you where he went." Then the Knight galloped off, dashing in the direction followed by those he wanted to overtake.

Perceval returned to the manor where his mother had anxiously waited during his long absence. When she saw him, she could not conceal her joy, and, embracing him a hundred times, she said,

"Dear son, dear son, where have you been so long?"

"Why, to be sure I'll tell you. Something I saw to-day filled my heart with delight. Mother, didn't you tell me that God's angels are so beautiful that no nobler creatures exist?"

"Yes, indeed, and I'll say so again."

"Well, mother, to-day in the forest I saw some beings that, I think, are more beautiful than the angels themselves."

His mother, trembling all over, took him in her arms and said, "Dear son, offer a prayer to God, for I'm very much afraid that you saw some of the fallen angels who bring horror and evil to men."

"No, no, mother, they told me that they were called Knights."

At this name the mother fell unconscious, and when she recovered, she wept and said, "Woe is me! Beloved son, I

hoped to turn you from Knighthood; I wished you never to see it nor ever to hear speak of it. If only you still had your father and your brothers to guide you! But your father, who was the worthiest Knight in all the land, was in single combat grievously wounded in both thighs and was forced to renounce an active life. His lands and his wealth were robbed from him by unjust neighbours. All that was left to him was this manor in the lonely forest whither he had himself carried, for he could no longer ride on horseback. You were then quite small and I still suckled you on my breast. But you had two older brothers whom their father sent to two Kings to be dubbed Knights, the one to the King of Escavalon, the other to King Ban of Gomeret. They received arms on the same day, and, alas! perished on the self-same day. They had set out together to visit their father and me and to fill us with joy at seeing them Knights, when their enemies surprised them and slew them both. At the death of his sons your father died from grief and since I have led a bitter life. You were my only wealth, my only comfort, my only joy; God has left me no other."

But the youth paid little heed to his mother's words and said, "Give me food, quickly, and I'll go seek out this King who makes Knights."

In vain his mother tried; she could but keep him back for three days—time that was needed to fit him out with equipment.

WILLOW.

One came into my house and said,
"The willows are in leaf again . . ."
And I laughed suddenly
for very pain
knowing my heart had died . . .
here's willow for a suicide.

OLIVE HOPEGOOD.

VOICES OF EUROPE.

Three Choruses from a Radio Play.

I.

Old Voices of Europe.

We live in a time of fearing—of long fearing.
Our cities are pale with the drear light of a cold dawn.
We are told: There is a young Day, a green Season, a fresh
Harvest,
Which the hours will escort—our hours of fearing.
'Lad, 'tis a new Day'—thus do we whisper,
Whisper and whimper in the long Marne valley,
Along the sepia canals of Belgium,
Under the moss-soft bridges of Brussels;
We cry to the row of slender crosses,
And to the thin plots of earth, and the faded poppies;
Half-calm we predict to our departed children,
The children of Europe, yesterday vanished—
A new Harvest! We exult with thin conviction.
And our children respond with ash-cold silence,
Shivering silence from the dark Marne valley,
From the sunset-crosses, the broken columns, the torn
canal-lands.
So
We live in a time of fearing—of long fearing.
Sometimes we fancy we catch the sound of a laugh,
From the mocking coldness of the endless crosses—
The air is rent with invisible music,
Sharply conflicting minor music,
Striving to laugh—in a time of long fearing. . . .

II.

The Middle-Aged of Europe.

The war was over, the fighting done, the hate appeased—
The long threads of waterlogged waste were tilled, fertile;
Express trains caroused from city to city, from country to country;
Oceans were traced and cut by our fleets of steel craft;
Factories hummed the keen Hymn of machinery. . . .

Now the struggle was finished, we might live in comparative comfort,
Our brothers are dead. Our sisters are brotherless, husbandless—
A pity . . . but we who are safe can live in comparative luxury . . .
Which we have well deserved after the ages of horror . . .

The restless and the malcontents have really no consideration
whatsoever for our feelings . . .
So we will turn our ears and our eyes from the inconsiderately
shrill malcontents.
There is peace, and these are good summers to be living in—
Good if the ears are sheltered, and the eyes shaded.
Our children are dancing to wild, exaggerated melodies.
Our parents are fretting unnecessarily.
Therefore we will enjoy in serenity the good summers—
The good summers to be living in. . . . .

III.

The Youth.

You must pardon us if we appear a little confused.
But with some eternally fearing, and others rejoicing,
It is difficult for us to take up a solid position.
We are so young and our parents rejoice and are vexed—
Some seek ever for clouds, the others for opalic skies.
It is a strange task for us, difficult—being so young.
Our shrines are torn down by this doubting. We cannot worship.
There are no gods known to stand everlasting doubt, timeless
jubilation.
So we had better enjoy ourselves while we yet may.
The hour is short—the hour is long. We cannot know—being so
young.
We shall do callisthenics in the Sports Palace . . . dance in
the Cabaret . . .
There are numerous good melodies coming from America . . .
We shall hate if we must, love if we must. There are no gods known to
tell us which . . .
Clear away the furniture and the rugs. We shall jazz and sing—

We are not very definite, are we?
But we live in a strange year; those about us laugh, and fret, and
command . . .
The cathedral is silent. The radio-tower is shrill . . .
We shall choose the best of our alternatives . . .
It is hard, being so young in the Autumn. . . . It is difficult. . . .

MUIR HOLBURN.

January, 1941.

AUSTRALIAN LITERATURE.

At the Annual Dinner of the Association in November last, the reply to the toast of Australian Literature was made by Miss Miles Franklin, one of our best-known authors. This is the text of her speech:

Mr. Inigo Jones has drawn attention to the rich field we have here for literary masterpieces. Nowhere could there be greater masses of unique and rich material for world masterpieces and a new advance in literature; but I am going to make a few rude and crude remarks as to why some of those masterpieces are not forthcoming.

By Australian literature I mean that which most truly expresses native thought, character and aspirations, naturally, from the inside. This kind of literature is generally primary. It is contained in balladry, drama and novels. It is from this kind of writing that a nation gains highest honour; it defines national personality. It can be rich in human documents and quite poor in *belles lettres*.

Now, what had Australia achieved in this field when the present disaster fell and put an end to the period?

You can hop back along the track of Australian writing to an early stage—to '68, and read what Barton says, and then come to '96 and consult Byrne—and they both say the same thing—and what they said can be said today, and is still being said. Australian writing has always struggled along like some of our native plants that do not yield to cultivation, but will not permit themselves to be extirpated.

In the 'nineties it seemed as if there were to be an Australian blossoming. Our balladists gave a delight and content to life that can be taken as the stirrings of culture. Then there were the Lawson short stories and others—Tom Collins with his great work in process of parturition. The ground seemed to be seething like spring with promise.

The war of 1914-18 put an end to that period. Much talent was no doubt squandered in war. Australia lost her precariously developing separate or extra entity by smashing her eggs in the imperial omelette. Not till the end of the 'twenties were there signs of recovery of the ground lost and of Australia becoming inherently articulate again in her stories. It was as ever a wavering and sporadic struggle. World operation of unlimited modern business competition with its attendant propaganda and supersalemanship was all against the native product in writing.

I'll give a few 'odious' examples of its working, just for fun.

I once went for a trip up the country with Mr. and Mrs. Frank Clune. It developed in part into a tour of the bookshops in country towns. Mr. Clune is a great man—a *very* great man. He can walk in and demand the head of the outfit and, when he appears, say: "You

lousy cow, do you ever give an Aussie author a chance?" And I have not selected the more gorgeously coloured of Mr. Clune's rich idioms, out of deference to the respectability and gentility of this situation in which I find myself this evening.

On asking one of these head men to show me his stock of Australian books I was told: "I never stock that Australian stuff, unless someone orders it specially. Angus and Robertson send me samples—that's enough. I got one this morning." I examined it and it turned out to be one of Mr. Idriess's. He then went on to boast that he had direct dealings with fifteen English publishers—Cape, Gollancz, Heinemann and others—and could sell a dozen of any 35/- book, and so many more of any guinea book by these publishers, and so forth. It was evident that "culchaw", as the *Bulletin* used to call it, had arrived in that town, but that there was no sense of self-respect or civic obligation in the nurture of native culture.

In another town I went to a war memorial library—hundreds of books—all trashy novels, but no Australians among them. The caretaker said that he was compelled to get his books through a club in Sydney and that out of a list of 90 titles he had got only three of those asked for, and that the men were always demanding Australian novels. So I inspected the substitutes. Trash—not one author as high as a Dell or a Rosman or a Ruby Ayres—not even one best-seller—names I had never heard. But I knew the publishers, and happen to know also their wonderful salesman, who is so winning that you would buy your own book from him if you weren't careful. And he had unloaded all these duds from his combination of firms on to Australia.

Do English writers have to suffer this kind of swamping from Australian publishers?

When I was in New York, some years since, I went to see a publisher about the work of a writer whom I consider to be in the front rank of our indigenous group. I got to the chief editor of perhaps one of the biggest publishing firms in the world—a firm which has on its lists many of the great books and the greatest living writers. This firm has a city of plant, and keeps only an office in New York—about an acre in extent. The reception-room library in the centre is comparable to the vast hall of a baronial mansion, only more luxurious and comfortable. All around were doors labelled Private and Mr. This and Mr. That. From these at intervals issued attendant houris—exact reproductions of Hollywood glamour. But at last I was fished out of this heavenly place with its stupendous offering of books and periodicals and met the great man. He said he would have to refuse my friend's book—with great regret because he had enjoyed it so much. It came up to him through thirteen readers. He could be sure of a *succès d'estime* with it, but he could not afford that kind of success with the depression on. (It is a paper shortage now.)

I should say not, with all those houris and that splendour! It was a great manufactory: the outlay must return percentages. However, I was astonished by the kind of success he predicted for this work because this writer, as I told him, was patronised in Australia and apologised for by our pundits as casual and lollopy in style. Oh, yes, he said, he is tremendously idiosyncratic, but you know after you read a page or two that you are in the company of a scholar and a gentleman, and very high-hat—and, he added, "his great charm is his deep love for and understanding of Australia, and that makes him too remote as a commercial proposition here".

Is the English or the Russian or the French author rejected because of his great love for and understanding of his own country?

From this man I went to the agent of an Australian author successful at home and abroad—one of our first-rankers. The agent said that he was afraid it would be difficult to place this writer's latest MS because it was not what was *expected* from Australia? "Couldn't you", said the agent, "tell her to send us some stories about your bushrangers, or the beaches with coconut palms and beachcombers?"

Does the American, the Irishman or the German have to write what is *expected* instead of what is actual about his own country?

Then a young woman here wrote a novel. Some chapters depicted our petty banalities so illuminatingly that we had great hopes for her. But she went abroad. She had success with serials and came home and told us about it. They liked her work in London, only she must not write about Australia. She said she could not write about anything else with knowledge and feeling. So she wrote about Australia and then went through her work and took out every reference to Australia.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, chorus all together please: Does the Italian or the Scandinavian or the Scot have to suppress every reference to his own country?

I have many other such illustrations, but that is enough. That is what Australian literature had to struggle against in this period now ended—a period as surely ended as the Elizabethan or Victorian. We await only the complete dismantling; we are moving for a short space as an animal sometimes does before he drops from the bullet which has killed him.

I'd like to quote a few lines of poetry to point my concluding remarks. This is called *High Water at London*:

> This is the wave that rang from shore to shore
> With alien battle cries; this is the wave
> That stood at Caesar's prow, that scornful gave
> Echo to Norman shout and Danish oar;
> This swerving flood in many old nights has drawn
> Seaward with such rare freight of dreams and fame,
> Valor, and high venture without a name,
> That even today its foam runs fire at dawn.

Ay, even today its tides go burnished bright
With pomp of kings and beauty of watching queens,
Glint of old armor, arrogant flags unfurled;
And never this hour comes brimming to its height
But, slow and deep, an answering pulse begins
In all the lonely waters of the world.

Now, that sonnet is not written by a native of any part of the British Empire; it is by a non-British subject. Ten centuries of poets and other writers, through accumulated emotion, adventure and experience, have worked that material to such a rich tilth that it has a power to suffuse readers with communicated ecstasy to the farthest corner of the world. Lovely phrases spring like perfumed flowers from the old culture of the English soil.

Our own continent is as thrilling as a phantom, and beautiful with the elusive and illusive quality of all mirage, but only the greatly gifted could at this stage capture it to put a new content into literature. And such a slow, deep growth is literature that it would be easier for a person of equal or greater talent than those quoted, here in Australia to use the old-world material and achieve with it, than to exercise the courage, the power, the fortitude, the self-immolation to conquer our own intransigent, stiff, resistant, unworked material. And, supposing a person of such talent did immolate herself on that altar, and produce some work equivalent, it would be still-born, or would die unnoticed after birth in the dust, because its subject would be too remote to interest the commercial world of book-making.

Just another illustrative quotation. Here is an invocation to the American Muse, really an invocation to America herself. This writer is seeking his "immortal quarry".

[Miss Franklin then read a poem beginning: "You are the buffalo-ghost, the broncho-ghost."]

Here is an American who has mastered his material and has achieved satisfying and splendidly challenging phrases in his own idiom: "Dollar silver in your saddle horn", "The Indian arrow in the Indian corn", and so on. In the strength of numbers and weight the people of the United States have developed a literary idiom in harmony with their soil. It took them twice as long as we have been here to get their continent into their literature—to become indigenous instead of expatriate literati. Have we to go through a similarly turbulent period, similarly extended? Speculation is idle. But in view of what the war may do to us I feel that any toast to any sprouts and vestiges of Australian literature as we have dreamed of it needs to be in the form of Hail and Farewell.

BROUGHT TO BOOK.

QUEENSLAND MEANJERINGS.

Meanjin Papers, Contemporary Queensland Prose and Verse. No. 1. Christmas, 1940; No. 2, February, 1941; No. 3, April, 1941. Edited and Published by Clement Byrne Christesen (Box 1871 W, G.P.O., Brisbane. 2s. each).

AUSTRALIAN culture seems, happily enough, to have reached a stage of evolution where an impulse to fuller expression is stirring throughout the continent. How explain otherwise the fact that our tree of poetry, during the last year or two, has suddenly started to put forth fresh twigs from many boughs? Individual books have been multiplying recently, and no less than three poetic anthologies are announced to be just over the horizon of publication. From South Australia has emerged the third annual offering of the Jindyworobak Anthology. Now, during the last six months, from Queensland have come three numbers of *Meanjin Papers*, containing handsels of contemporary verse and prose.

"Meanjin", it appears, is the native word for Brisbane, so that Queenslanders, like the Jindyworobakians, are claiming kinship with the land's aboriginal lore. Both names, too, have a certain aptness. Just as the title of the Adelaide collection translates itself irresistibly in one's mind as Jabberwocky, which chimes in well with verse on Alcheringa, Ooligu, and a yacadiddy at play, so the contributors to the *Meanjin Papers* go experimenting in a rambling manner one might well call "meanjering".

The prose, by the way, apart from short editorial and news items, is confined to an essay by James Picot on present trends of Australian poetry. The writer proclaims needs, however, rather than traces actual trends. He discerns four needs of the contemporary local poet: an expression of the national background in wider, and more suitable, terms than those of the old ballad school; a relationship with the wide world and its intellectual or social developments; a fuller recognition by local critics of the special character of the long poem as distinct from the short lyric; and the right to continue practice of the short lyrical poems in its traditional melodious forms. These points are ably handled despite a certain inconclusiveness about the essay as a whole, and they are so sound in themselves that it is somewhat surprising to find a correspondent quoted in the next number commending Mr. Picot's "definite and provocative point of view . . . controversy is what we want". Surely the critical creed stated is hardly provocative or controversial—it is mere common sense to any intelligent critic.

It remains true, nevertheless, that in Australia contemporary poets and critics are outdistancing the ordinary reader, still trammelled

with the toils of the Gordon legend, or imbued with the desire to use Keats as a poetic yardstick. Awareness of the gap is reflected in a defensive attitude by Mr. C. B. Christesen, editor and publisher of the *Meanjin Papers*. Thus the first issue last Christmas was labelled "Traditionalist Number", the second was modernist without the label, and this produced such critical opposition that the third became "Everyman's Number"—to appease readers who wanted their verse served simple and singing. But compromise and appeasement, as the late disastrous Mr. Chamberlain learnt to his own and an imperilled Empire's costs, are policies that do not pay, in poetry as in politics. It is encouraging, therefore, to find that the editor is still unrepentantly prepared, in fulfilling the main object of the *Papers*, to present the best available literary work by Queensland writers, to publish unpalatable poets so long as their work is "a sincere expression of an individual vision".

Yet even sincerity, like patriotism, is not enough. The conventional poetaster may be as sincere over his roses and regets as Milton was over the fall of Lucifer; the difference between them lies in such other qualities as intensity of feeling, depth of imagination, and power to shape thoughts and emotions in verbal form. On the whole, one is left with the impression that the good intentions of the Meanjin poets outrun their performance. Often they seem to be over-preoccupied with form, instead of letting their subject take hold of them and follow its impulse into a suitable style. There is little reflection of the maturity achieved in a personal idiom, such as FitzGerald, for instance, reveals in all his later work. The verses do not strike memorable notes or call for rereading. Whether because of the changing editorial policy indicated above, or because the poets themselves are still engaged in finding their poetic feet, the collection gives a sense of experimental diversity rather than of achieved unity.

Modern influences, such as those of Eliot and Hopkins, have not been fully digested, and the result is, in turn, sometimes indigestible fare for the reader. We bark our shins over Brian Vrepont's jagged

> Concuss concordance; not for thee
> To asperse thyself in drips.

We come upon Paul L. Grano's "Windy Day" and feel, Hopkins apart, that this sort of thing was once done better by the author of "Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers".

As for Joseph O'Dwyer's "Vanity vulture feeds on the philoprogenitive liver", no merit emerges from these conscientious imitations of Eliot, with that poet's more superficial conventions displayed in each piece like a cubist painter laboriously painting Picasso's guitar in the corner of all his pictures.

The Meanjerers are rightly seeking new methods of expression, attempting to enlarge the forms and diction of contemporary Australian poetry. Such attempts are necessary, and in this respect their

exploratory efforts are both praiseworthy and valuable, even if still unrewarded with rich discoveries. After all, the exploring must come first, and it is only by dint of such rather thankless tasks that our poets may yet happily stumble, after laboured measures, upon some new pastures. At present, it must be confessed, their wanderings are apt to reveal the lack of a sense of direction.

Vrepont stands out as the best poet of the *Meanjin Papers*, and his "Heron" has a quiet charm in a traditional mode:

> Now she stays her burnished beak, for she has done;
> She arches her neck, and knowing well her beauty,
> Looks at her gleaming image in the water mirror,
> And with a heavy lift of sodden wings, lifts up
> Her wonder, and leaves the empty lake.

"The Individual", again, is a piece which has a thought worth developing and opens well in gnomic fashion with good phrasing. Unfortunately, the technique is not adequately sustained, and falls into some awkward collocations, although the poem still remains one of the best in the *Papers*. So, too, "In the Company of T. S. Eliot" is forceful with its stark image and such lines to Eliot as

> you took affright,
> Huddled in a corner and whipped yourself
> For loving so, in shock of doubt
> Shuddered and began telling the beads of fear.

This is at once good writing and sound literary criticism. But the collection hardly shows Vrepont at his best, with nothing as powerful as his former "The Stoker", published in the last Jindyworobak Anthology, and "The Miracle", for which, when in manuscript, I once stoutly barracked as a judge of the 1939 C. J. Dennis Memorial Prize and helped to secure the award.

Paul L. Grano emerges as a contributor who can strike out fresh phrases and images, such as

> Dumb time will dumb remembrance
> And deaf distance unear regret.

> So as bird this day has flashed my stream,
> Its lean banks and snakelike turnings,
> Its sun-tongued reaches, its dark, snagged pools.

His pieces, however, do not keep up such a level and miss as rounded concepts. His sententious approach in "Pray Pity for Bill Smith", for instance, can be seen in its inadequacy if placed alongside such a concrete imaging of a similar theme in Carl Sandburg's "Fish-Crier".

Equipped with a lively mind and cultured knowledge, James Picot is more successful as essayist than poet. "Australia to a War" begins promisingly with its vigorous

> If you would smash my volley at the net—
> Strings to the court! Come on!

and it ends well with the grave finale:

> Though I am of the sunlight, there are ghosts;
> Messines, Gallipoli, lead back their hosts,
> And these were men, and all is for the children.

The body of the verse, nevertheless, jerks about and grows turgid. The same faults appear in "Les Fatigues", which yet contains some pungent quips at those ordinary readers too tired to grapple with the complexities of modern verse.

As editor of the *Meanjin Papers*, C. B. Christesen distinguishes himself by refraining from using more than a modicum of his own work. "Morning Bound" swings along cheerily as a sea-ballad, and the modern touch of ironic disillusionment completes the lyrical "There Was a Moon Last Night".

Other contributors, such as Paula Fitzgerald, Ernest Briggs, Clem Lack, Jean J. Laidlaw, and Peter Miles, present verse of an f.a.q. rating, and Llywelyn Lucas gives lyrical promise.

It is to be hoped that *Meanjin Papers* will continue to give a forum for poets in Queensland and afford to poetic activity there that stimulus and opportunity for criticism which can only be given by publication. Through its medium the older writers may find both expression and development, the fledglings try out their uncertain wings.

T. Inglis Moore.

PRELUDES—TO WHAT MUSIC?

The Breaking of the Drought, by Harley Matthews; *Kaleidoscope*, by Dorothy Auchterlounie; *The Untrammelled*, by Betty Riddell; *The Map*, by Elisabeth Lambert. (The Viking Press, Sydney, 1940. 2s. 6d. each.)

At a time when the arts are faring badly, the Viking Press is doing our literature valuable service, and its publication of four works in the Prelude series of Australian poems deserves the gratitude of lovers of poetry. The poems are attractively produced; though they are all quite short, each is printed in a separate booklet, with decorations by Bessie Mitchell, and the colours of the covers are particularly pleasing.

The four poems differ in subject and style. The most conventional of them, *The Breaking of the Drought*, by Harley Matthews, is also the least memorable. In a rhetorical prose foreword Mr. Matthews attempts to interpret the spirit of Australia; in his poem he presents it symbolically. The latter is, however, a slight piece, and although the atmosphere of a drought-stricken land is conveyed with skill, the climax is weak and the language commonplace.

Dorothy Auchterlounie gives us Australia too, but from another point of view. It is urban Australia that she presents, and her approach is critical rather than encomiastic. *Kaleidoscope* is a welcome contribution to the neglected field of satire, showing how man's subservience to his own scientific achievements results in a loss of initiative and the stifling of the imagination. The theme is of course

not new, but Miss Auchterlounie's treatment of it is witty, and the Sydney background adds to the enjoyment. She describes in mock-heroic style various well-known places, such as Wynyard Station, Hyde Park (where are

> Gods of stucco, cold and stark,
> Lost in a proletarian park)

and Luna Park. The modern man's daily round of work and pleasure is gaily satirized, though one feels that Miss Auchterlounie has not fully exploited the possibilities of her theme. She shows, however, a gift for compression necessary to the successful handling of the rhymed couplet; this is seen in the concluding couplets, which pithily express the moral of the satire:

> Yet pity 'tis they gave so much
> When men but ruin what they touch—
> For men, of gods the prototype,
> Would take a star to light a pipe.

Betty Riddell's poem *The Untrammelled* transfers us to the sphere of personal emotion. Her subject is essentially dramatic: the woman's instinctive desire to possess her lover wholly, the man's refusal to surrender "the folded secrets of his mind". Miss Riddell's treatment of this situation is the stronger because of a sharp directness of attack. She understands her characters thoroughly, and her description of the death of love shows an acute insight which is evident throughout the poem:

> Like candlelight
> On which a hand descends too carelessly
> It was gone out; but lingered bitterly
> As does a flame, in spirals of thin smoke.

Despite some felicitous phrases, the poem is not free from faults of diction; for instance, the unpleasant run of sibilants in the first sentence mars the effectively terse conclusion:

> So she, from windows curiously dull
> Stared at the outside and sane-seeming day
> And saved herself from sorrow with a sneer.
> And, empty-handed, robbed and left most free
> He passed out of the garden and away
> With his pale moon and faunish company.

The most striking of these poems is Elisabeth Lambert's *The Map*. Miss Lambert's previous volume, *Insurgence*, proved her to be a young poet of exceptional promise; its finest qualities—the writer's powerful use of language and her warm sympathy with suffering humanity—are again evident in *The Map*. The style is a little chastened by comparison; she does not play so many daring tricks with parts of speech; but technically she adheres to the modern tradition. The theme of the poem, which was written in August, 1939, is the injustice of artificially created frontiers; they are not, she points out, mere lines on a map, and cannot be altered without hurt to human lives:

Each line means
A man, a woman and a child,
Multiplied to millions,
But finally,
One man, one woman and one child.

The remedy is to blot out the frontier lines, and "Paint the whole map One colour". After this sincere appeal to forget national boundaries, the epilogue in praise of England follows a little oddly, but it is in itself an eloquent tribute, ending with the pertinent question "To what use put this?"

As an illustration both of Miss Lambert's command of words and of that "intellectual honesty" to which *Insurgence* was dedicated, the following passage from the prologue may be quoted:

Here is our tragedy—
That we weep no more harsh tears
Nor cry aloud our wrongs,
But take with hands in suppliant gesture
The meagre tithe,
That we no longer see our shame
But as a thing pitied and pitiable,
That our despair is as a shallow pool
That vanishes in the early sun of slight revival,
And that our laughter no more springs
To the lips loudly.

Elisabeth Lambert obviously possesses the emotional and intellectual equipment needed for the making of fine poetry. She has already achieved much; there is good reason to believe that her future achievements will be higher still.

THELMA HERRING.

WORDS AND THINGS.

Think—Or Be Damned, by Brian Penton. (Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1941. 2s. 6d.)

SCIENTISTS and philosophers are becoming increasingly interested in language as a means of communicating thought. Some are struck by the inadequacy of the medium, many by its capacity not only to darken, but also to distort meaning. The worst form of distortion appears when language enables an irresponsible or dishonest user of it to give the appearance of thought, even profound thought, where in fact there is no thought at all. The modern art of propaganda has its basis in this use of language. Language must be handled with care, preferably by the writer and speaker; if not, by the listener and reader who should be on their guard against the power of persuasion that resides in impressive words which, on examination, prove to be no more than words, with no solid foundation of meaning. Particular attention must be given to collective and abstract nouns, which are useful for convenience of reference, but dangerous if we assume too readily that the things to which they refer have a real

existence in the world of nature. These are what Mr. Penton calls the "highfalutin abstractions, such as 'democracy', 'freedom of thought and expression', 'liberty of the subject', 'equality before the law', 'nationhood', 'civil rights and liberties' ", which should be "approached with a suspicious mind and a desire to find out what observable, weighable, countable, touchable phenomena in nature can justify you in using them, and how, when you do use them, you will use them as unambiguously as you use the words 'pound avoirdupois' ".

Many books have been written on the modern science of semantics, which deals with the relationship between the world of things and the language which is its symbol. One of the best known is *The Tyranny of Words* by Stuart Chase. Mr. Penton owes much to Chase and the debt is fully acknowledged. But there is a striking difference in tone between the two books. Chase wrote his in a mood of calm thoughtfulness, after, as he says, he had been for many years engaged in political and social theorising and had come to realise the futility of such theorising and discussion while an irresponsible and uncritical use of language persisted. His most effective weapon is a quiet sarcasm. Mr. Penton, in a time of crisis, writes his book "in a mood somewhere between horror, fear, anger and irrational faith in the future of this continent", and he insists upon the necessity for "ill-mannered cantankerous, unpatriotic, subversive and destructive thought, aimed to expunge from our national vocabulary every word, slogan, or inflating poetic dictum which cannot be proved to have a meaning". Mr. Penton's own style is overemphatic, and, one feels, less effective than the calmer, more thoughtful style of Stuart Chase. But he has done a good service in awakening us to the urgent need for a more careful use of language in our national life. He tells us we must respect language, not because it is venerable but because it is dangerous; for it serves the purposes of the just and the unjust with equal effectiveness.

A. G. Mitchell.

NOTES ON NOTABLES.

National Portraits, by Vance Palmer. (Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1941. 8s. 6d.)

In *National Portraits* Vance Palmer turns his attention to Australian history, and his gallery includes such diverse figures as the Judge—George Higinbotham—the Painter—Louis Buvelot—the Banker—Sir Denison Miller—and eighteen others, selected, as the author tells us in the Foreword, "either because of their representative character, or because they seemed to me true pioneers, originating ideas and tapping springs that were later to enrich the national life. Sir Henry Parkes, for instance, was chosen for the first reason: Louis Buvelot for the second."

Although we are fairly familiar with the work of such men as John Macarthur, Lachlan Macquarie, William Charles Wentworth, Charles Sturt, John Dunmore Lang and Sir Henry Parkes, the author brings to this book a freshness of approach and a refusal to be intimidated by the established reputation of the men he is depicting, so that they appear to us in a new light. Nor does he portray his heroes *in vacuo*: Mr. Palmer is good enough historian to realise the importance of background, and accordingly places each man in his setting, showing the influences that moulded him and the task he faced in bending his environment to his will.

The style of the author is trenchant and incisive and his occasional use of modern colloquial expressions adds to the popular appeal of the volume. Thus of the conflict between Bligh and Macarthur he writes: "Scandalous stories about the racketeering of the Rum Corps had reached the ears of the authorities overseas. It was felt that a clean-up was necessary, an abolition of the privileges the officers and their friends had seized, a return to the original plan of a convict-and-small farmer colony, run, at the same time, in the interests of the expatriated settler and of the Government who had thought it necessary to get rid of him."

Mr. Palmer's reading, too, has provided him with a wealth of quotation which he uses wisely to illumine his subject; for example, to illustrate W. C. Wentworth's lack of humour, he says: "Could any but a humourless man, even under the compulsion of an eighteenth century style, have written of the last crowd of castaways: 'And one, sad sepulchre of all the rest'?"

John Dunmore Lang's fiery and explosive nature comes to light in the quotation of his denunciation from the pulpit of the Church of Scotland as "a synagogue of Satan actuated by a spirit of rancorous hostility towards him which could only have emanated from the fathers of evil".

Of the comparatively modern portraits, the two best, as we might expect, are those of J. F. Archibald, the editor of 'The Bulletin' for so many years, and Henry Lawson. Here, Mr. Palmer shows himself as a shrewd judge of men and a sound critic of literature. His final opinion of Lawson's work is that it "holds its own with any other in our literature for seriousness and purity. . . . What Professor Saillens has called the 'might' of Lawson's art has not been recognised, but it has had great effect. . . . Lawson gave eyes to people who otherwise would never have looked at the life around them with penetration and understanding. In his brief, unemphatic sketches he made Australians, for the first time, aware of themselves."

Although Vance Palmer is in no sense the Australian Strachey (his research has not gone deep enough for that, nor does he coin the witty and memorable phrase), his *National Portraits* is a contribution to Australian biography, and deserving of its recommendation from the Advisory Board of the Commonwealth Literary Fund.

LILIAN FLYNN.

THE AUSTRALIAN ENGLISH ASSOCIATION.

Annual Report, 1940.

THE year just closed must be considered one of the most eventful in the Association's history, for besides important constitutional changes its long meditated magazine was launched on what, it must be agreed, seemed somewhat troublous seas.

But the decision to publish SOUTHERLY having been accepted as a vital part of the Association's policy, it is gratifying to be able to proclaim the increasing success of the venture with each succeeding issue of the magazine.

It has considerably enhanced the prestige of the Association, further lustre being added by the publication of Dr. Mitchell's pamphlet on "The Pronunciation of English in Australia".

However, the point stressed at the last Annual General Meeting must be reaffirmed, that the Association counts on the whole-hearted support of its members.

Its success, indeed its very existence, depends now, more than ever, on a healthy membership. The Committee decided that the Association must continue, for its fills a definite place in the cultural life of the State; it asks, therefore, with every hope of response, for the help and support of its members.

The Annual General Meeting was held on Monday, 22nd April, Dr. Thatcher presiding.

The Annual Report and the Treasurer's statement and Annual Balance Sheet were read and adopted, after which the office-bearers for the year were elected.

When the formal business was concluded Dr. Thatcher gave an address on "Language and Literature".

The Annual Dinner was held in the Withdrawing Room at the University on 19th November, and was very well attended. Mr. Green presided.

The toast of "The Association" was proposed by Right Rev. C. J. Pilcher, D.D., Bishop Coadjutor, and was replied to by Dr. A. G. Mitchell.

"Australian Literature" was proposed by Mr. Inigo Jones and the reply was by Miss Miles Franklin.

The editing of *Southerly* has entailed a great deal of work for Mr. Howarth and his coadjutor, Dr. Mitchell, and the Association owes them its unqualified thanks.

We are once again indebted to Mr. Williams for his kindness in auditing the Annual Balance Sheet, and we desire to express our appreciation and thanks.

During the year the following addresses were given:

April.—Dr. A. G. Mitchell: "The Pronunciation of English in Australia."

May.—Mr. R. G. Howarth: "The Stuffed Mopoke."
June.—Miss F. Earle Hooper: "Anne Thackeray Ritchie."
July.—Mr. R. Ormsby Martin: "Chinese Poetry and Chinese History."
August.—Miss Joyce Ackroyd: "Modern Poetic Drama." Mr. R. G. Geering: "Some Poets of the Last War."
September 17th.—Mr. John Alden: "The English Theatre, 1937-1940."
September 23rd.—Professor F. A. Todd: "Pompeii Calling."
October.—Dr. A. H. McDonald: "History as Literature."
November.—Dame Mary Gilmore: "Our Neglected Epic."

H. M. BUTTERLEY,
Hon. Secretary.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Australian English.

The Editors of *Southerly*.
Dear Sirs,

Even at the risk of appearing impervious to the delightful humour of Hugh McCrae's "The Mimshi Maiden", may I add from it, to those I gave in the last issue of *Southerly*, another example of word-weakness? On page 41 of the *Poems* I find:

> Mishu-Mishu,
> He the princess pledged to marry,
> Climbed a loquat, dodged the issue,
> Almost scared to *hara-kari*.

Has McCrae been so hara-karied away by rhyme as to forget all his Japanese?

Yours strictly,
PEDANT.

NOTES.

CONGRATULATIONS are extended to Mr. R. K. Levis, a member of the Australian English Association, who has won the Henry Lawson Prize for Prose, awarded annually by the University of Sydney.

Grateful acknowledgments of further donations to *Southerly* are made to the following: Mrs. C. J. Brennan and Mr. C. J. H. O'Brien.

Dr. A. G. Mitchell's lecture on "The Pronunciation of English in Australia", published by the Association last year, is mentioned and summarised in the issue of *Notes and Queries* for September 14, 1940.

A public lecture on *Julius Cæsar* will be delivered by Mr. Sydney Musgrove, B.A., Lecturer in Classics and English at the New England University College, Armidale, in the Union Hall at the University on August 19 at 8 p.m. Tickets, at 1s. each, are obtainable from the Hon. Secretary.

AUSTRALIAN ENGLISH ASSOCIATION.

Income and Expenditure Account for the year Ended 31st December, 1940.

1940. Dec. 31.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	1940. Dec. 31.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
To Proportion of Subscriptions due to the English Association, London—			By Membership Subscriptions—		
79 Ordinary Members at 1/-	3 19 0		10 Ordinary Members at 13/6	6 15 0	
10 Ordinary Members at 3/-	1 10 0		66 Ordinary Members at 10/6	34 13 0	
1 Life Member at £3/3/-	3 3 0		2 Ordinary Members at 10/-	1 0 0	
		8 12 0	1 Ordinary Member at 10/6	0 10 6	
					42 18 6
„ Proportion of Life Subscription reserved, 18⅓% of £5		0 18 6	(Paid 1939) 1 Life Member at £5		5 0 0
„ Printing, Petty Cash and Postages		13 12 8	„ Miscellaneous Receipts—		
„ Hire of Meeting Rooms		7 15 0	Annual Dinner	14 15 7	
„ Exchange and Bank Charges ..		1 14 3	Publications:		
„ Printing—			*Southerly*	15 12 10	
Southerly	69 6 6		Tempest	1 7 8	
Pron. of English	21 0 0		Pron. of English	18 14 1	
Recorder	4 7 6		Miscellaneous	0 12 6	
Notices	1 5 6				51 2 8
Bookmarks	2 3 10		„ Interest received		1 1 11
		98 3 4	„ Donations		11 8 6
„ Dinner		16 16 4	„ Excess of Expenditure over income transferred to Life Members' Subscription A/c ..		36 0 6
		£147 12 1			£147 12 1

AUSTRALIAN ENGLISH ASSOCIATION.

Balance Sheet as at 31st December, 1940.

	£ s. d.	£ s. d.		£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Life Members' Subscription A/c as at 31st December, 1939	57 16 0		Cash at Banks—		
Plus 18½% of subscriptions received	0 18 6		Commercial Banking Co. of Sydney	7 13 9	
	58 14 6		Commonwealth Savings Bank of Australia	25 3 3	
Less Excess of Expenditure over Income for year	36 0 6				32 17 0
		22 14 0			
Ordinary Members' Subscriptions paid in advance		1 11 0			
The English Association, London ..		8 12 0			
		£32 17 0			£32 17 0

Certified correct.
FRED. T. BERMAN, Hon. Treasurer, 15/1/41.
T. WILLIAMS, Hon. Auditor, 11/2/41.